

Good afternoon my name is Clement Lewin Head of Medical Affairs and Immunization Policy at Novartis Vaccines and Diagnostics. First I would like to thank Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and the members of the Public Health Committee for the opportunity to provide input into their deliberations. Novartis Vaccines is headquartered in Cambridge Massachusetts and is the fifth largest vaccine manufacturer in the world producing a range of vaccines for children and adults. We currently market five vaccines in the United States that provide protection against influenza, meningococcal disease, rabies and Japanese Encephalitis. Novartis Vaccines is committed to making our vaccines available within the State and to working with immunization stakeholders in Connecticut to maintain and raise coverage rates

Novartis supports manufacturer brand choice in all publicly funded programs including the VFC program. Novartis believes that Immunization programs should not limit the ability of providers to choose between products that have already been deemed safe and effective by the FDA, reviewed by the ACIP with no preference expressed and selected for the VFC program. Novartis believes that provider brand choice is an important component to ensuring a reliable vaccine supply in the United States as it provides the best mechanism of permitting all manufacturers have a chance to gain market share in the State and provides ready access to alternatives. Providers and practices should have brand choice under the following circumstances:

- When a brand choice exists
- When the ACIP has recommended the vaccine brand
- When the vaccine brand is included in the Vaccine For Children Program

All vaccines have unique attributes which make them more suitable for some patients than others. For example, some vaccines do not contain latex and are therefore suitable for latex allergic patients. The healthcare provider is best able to make an informed decision on which vaccine brand(s) to choose for his patients.

Novartis believes that in the long-term, vaccine brand choice will strengthen the immunization enterprise. Choice helps stabilize vaccine supply by encouraging multiple sources of supply while non-choice, "a winner take all" approach, disadvantages new entrants to the market, stifles innovation, and does not allow providers access to all recommended options when deciding what is best for patients.

Novartis believes that product choice offers significant benefits to the US immunization enterprise that have been recognized by stakeholders such as the CDC whose vaccine procurement policies are designed to encourage and facilitate choice. Indeed 42 immunization programs offer providers vaccine brand choice where it exists and the

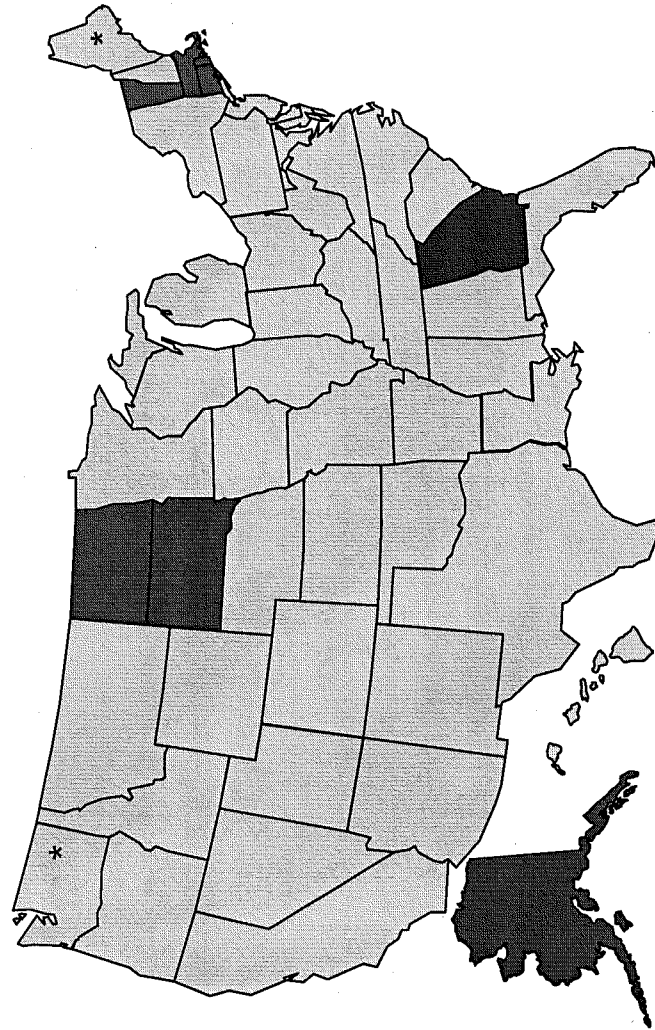
trend is towards offering choice in Universal Purchase programs such as Connecticut's. In the last year several programs have taken steps to implement provider brand choice for example, Maine, New Hampshire and Washington. We therefore hope that Connecticut will implement a system that provides providers and practices the discretion to choose what products they administer to their patients.

The nation has largely moved to choice because it is the right thing to do for providers, children, and public health; it is also the right thing to do for Connecticut. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify.

Please see page 2 Map of Vaccine Choice

# Improving Public Health: Achieving Vaccine Choice in Connecticut

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\* WA is now implementing vaccine provider choice; ME will return to a Universal Purchase program in October and offer provider brand choice.

- 42 states offer provider brand choice for all ACIP-recommended vaccines
- Connecticut is 1 of 8 states where vaccine brand choice for VFC providers is not available
- CDC contracting policy is designed to encourage choice, as CDC lists all ACIP-recommended products and maintains a centralized storage and distribution system for VFC program vaccines
- Limiting provider brand choice will not boost the state's immunization rates or save the state money